

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 036521 TOSEC 020080
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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DRAFTED BY: S/S:PSEBASTIAN:GJK

APPROVED BY: S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 036521 TOSEC 020080

NODIS

CHEROKEE

FOLLOWING REPEAT MOSCOW 2280 TO SECSTATE FEB 17, 1977

QTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2280

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SHUM, CSCE, UR, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO SAKHAROV

REF: SECTO 2016

1. IN ACCORD WITH REFTTEL, EMBOFF (COMBS) TELEPHONED SAKHAROV MORNING OF FEBRUARY 17 AND SUGGESTED HE MIGHT WISH TO COME TO EMBASSY LATER THAT DAY; SAKHAROV AGREED TO COME AT 3:30 P.M.

2. UPON HIS ARRIVAL WE DELIVERED PRESIDENT'S LETTER. SAKHAROV EXPRESSED THANKS AND SAID HE PLANNED TO HOLD A PRESS CONFIDENTIAL

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REFERENCE AT 7:00 P.M. THAT EVENING, FEBRUARY 17, AT WHICH HE WOULD ANNOUNCE FULL TEXT OF PRESIDENT'S LETTER. HE SAID HE WOULD ALSO RELEASE TEXT OF A NEW LETTER, DATED FEBRUARY 17, WHICH FORMALLY RESPONDS TO PRESIDENT'S LETTER. TEXT OF SAKHAROV'S NEW LETTER FOLLOWS. SUBSTANCE OF OTHER COMMENTS SAKHAROV MADE DURING FEBRUARY 17 MEETING REPORTED SEPTTEL.

3. REGARDING LINE TO BE TAKEN WITH PRESS, IF SAKHAROV REVEALS THAT HE RECEIVED THE LETTER VIA EMBASSY, WE PLAN ONLY TO CONFIRM THAT EMBASSY TRANSMITTED LETTER. WE WILL NOT COMMENT FURTHER. IF SAKHAROV REVEALS THAT HE GAVE EMBASSY HIS REPLY TO PRESIDENT, WE WILL MERELY CONFIRM. WE PLAN TO ANSWER ANY OTHER QUESTIONS WITH NO COMMENT.

4. BEGIN TEXT. DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: YOUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY 6 (SIC), WHICH I RECEIVED TODAY, REPRESENTS A GREAT HONOR FOR ME AND SUPPORT FOR THE SINGLE MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USSR AND THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE, A MOVEMENT IN WHICH WE CONSIDER OURSELVES TO BE A PART. YOU AFFIRMED IN THIS LETTER, JUST AS YOU HAD DONE EARLIER, IN YOUR INAUGURAL ADDRESS AND OTHER STATEMENTS, THE DEVOTION OF THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IS YOUR STRIVING TO FACILITATE THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE.

I WROTE, IN MY CONGRATULATORY TELEGRAM ON THE OCCASIN OF YOUR ELECTION, OF THE DEEP RESPECT WHICH YOUR POSITION EVOKES IN US. I HAVE FREQUENTLY WRITTEN AND SAID THAT THE DEFENSE OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOT INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, BUT IS ONE OF THE MOST CENTRAL ELEMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, INSEPARABLE FROM THE BASIC PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND PROGRESS. TODAY, HAVING RECEIVED

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YOUR LETTER, THE EXCEPTIONAL NATURE OF WHICH I CLEARLY UNDERSTAND, I CAN ONLY ONCE AGAIN REPEAT THIS.

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OCCASION TO REFER TO CONCRETE CASES, IN PARTICULAR THE FATE OF THOSE PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE ABOUT WHICH I WROTE YOU IN JANUARY. ONE OF THEM, SERGEY KOVALEV, HAS A DANGEROUS TUMOR. I ASK YOU TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF HIS IMMEDIATE TRANSFER TO THE PRISON HOSPITAL IN LENINGRAD. I ONCE AGAIN UNDERSCORE THE ARBITRARY NATURE OF SINGLING OUT NAMES OF PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE. I FEEL I DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE SUCH A SELECTION. THE FATE OF MANY, MANY POLITICAL PRISONERS REQUIRES THE SAME KIND OF CLOSE ATTENTION.

FOUR MEMBERS OF THE GROUP TO FACILITATE FULFILLMENT OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT WERE ARRESTED IN FEBRUARY-- ALEKSANDR GINZBURG, MIKOLA RUDENKO, OLEKSA TIKHIY, AND THE GROUP'S LEADER, YURIY ORLOV. THEIR ARREST IS A

CHALLENGE TO ALL GOVERNMENTS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE
HELSINKI MEETING. I ASK THAT YOU INTERCEDE FOR THE
RELEASE ON BAIL OR UNDER GUARANTEE OF GINSBURG AND RUDENKO,
BOTH OF WHOM ARE ILL. THE ACTIVE EFFORTS OF THE HEADS
OF STATE OF ALL HELSINKI-SIGNATORY COUNTRIES ARE REQUIRED
SO THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP CAN BE FREED, SO AS TO
ENABLE IT TO CONTINUE ITS IMPORTANT WORK.

FROM FOREIGN RADIO BROADCASTS I LEARNED THAT
YOU HAVE EXPRESSED A WISH TO MEET WITH ME, IF I TRAVEL
TO THE U.S.A. I APPRECIATE VERY MUCH THIS INVITATION.
I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SUCH A TRIP AND SUCH PERSONAL
CONTACTS COULD HAVE EXTRAORDINARY SIGNIFICANCE.
UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, AT THE PRESENT TIME I SEE NO
POSSIBILITY FOR A TRIP OF THIS SORT.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE
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EFFORTS OF PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL, YOUR PERSONAL EFFORTS,
MR. PRESIDENT, WILL ASSIST IN THE REALIZATION OF
THOSE HIGH AIMS ABOUT WHICH YOU WROTE IN YOUR LETTER TO
ME.

WITH DEEP RESPECT, SINCERELY, ANDREY SAKHAROV
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 17, 1977
MOSCOW, UL. CHKALOVA NO. 48, APT. 68; 227-27-20; 561-70-17.
END TEXT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, CAT-B, CHEROKEE 02/17/77, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE036521
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/S:PSEBASTIAN:GJK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: N770001-0588
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770230/aaaabbar.tel
Line Count: 149
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 539417c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 77 SECTO 2016
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3293356
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO SAKHAROV
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SHUM, PPDC, UR, US, CSCE, (SAKHAROV, ANDREY)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/539417c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009